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# London County Council.

## SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

REPORT by the Architect upon Public Slaughterhouses in Continental Cities visited by him.

*(Printed by order of the Public Health Committee, 13th October, 1898.)*

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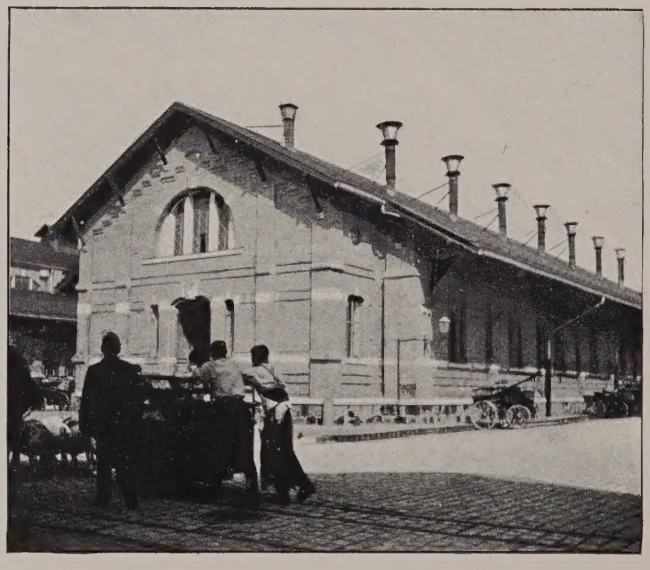

SLAUGHTER-HALL FOR BEASTS.

Views from the public slaughterhouses, Leipsic.

# London County Council.

## SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

REPORT by the Architect upon Public Slaughterhouses in Continental Cities visited by him.

(*Printed by order of the Public Health Committee, 13th October,* 1898.)

Superintending Architect's Department,
Spring-gardens, S.W.,
13th October, 1898.

In accordance with the Committee's instructions, I visited, during the recent vacation, amongst other places in Germany, the towns of Frankfurt a/M, Leipzic, Halle, Eisenach and Wiesbaden, all of which have been provided on different scales according to their importance with public abattoirs that agree in principle with a very large number recently constructed in many German towns, great and small. I had previously had the advantage of conferring with the medical officer, and have seen the documents which he had before him when preparing his report on the subject.

With few exceptions these modern abattoirs are built at a considerable distance from the nearest suburban buildings. They are placed in connection with a line of railway by which cattle are brought to market, and the market buildings usually form an adjoining group. The buildings of the abattoir include lairs for animals about to be slaughtered, separate places for such as are unsound, slaughterhouses for different kinds of animals, cold storage for meat, buildings for the treatment and disposal of the offal and offensive products, accommodation for the vehicles, horses, and dogs of the butchers, market rooms with restaurants, banks, and railway offices. There is an ample water supply, steam power for the production of ice and the maintenance of a low temperature in the cool chambers and for all other purposes, and an installation of electric light. At Leipzic electric trams from the town have their terminus in the very centre of the establishment.

The ample area which has been acquired for the larger abattoirs has enabled the buildings to be placed at a considerable distance apart. The slaughterhouses and the more important buildings have paved thoroughfares between them, equal or superior in width to our finest streets. At Leipzic the entrance roadway which runs into the centre of the market is 115 ft. in width, and the ordinary roadways are from 40 to 50 or 60 feet. In general the buildings are grouped so that none which are used for different purposes are joined together. Thus the circulation of air in the open spaces is amply secured, and all the buildings are well lighted and ventilated.

It may be a question how far the wide spaces here noticed are really necessary. In some cases the arrangement is more compact, but, I think, these are usually of smaller dimensions, and of an older type. Where land is dear this will be an important consideration.

There is in general a great similarity in the style of the architecture, which is handsome, and gives an impression of the importance of the establishments. They compare with our finest public

hospitals or asylums, and expense has not been spared in obtaining solidity and efficiency of construction and arrangement.

Although care has been taken to keep these great establishments away from private buildings, there is, so far as I can see, no objection on the part of private persons to build and live near the markets and abattoirs, for new streets are laid out, and new groups of factories, shops, offices and residences are erected, and in fact, new suburbs are springing up close to the entrance gates. This results no doubt partly from the business which springs up in connection with such establishments, but it is largely due to the attention which has been devoted to their appearance, and to their freedom from any cause of offence.

By the courtesy of the officers responsible as architects or as medical superintendents of the abattoirs which I visited, I was enabled to examine into every detail of the construction and management, sometimes during the busiest hours of the day. They were good enough to indicate to me the merits of their establishments, and also the points which they thought capable of amendment. I was able also to get some independent evidence as to the whole system of which the abattoirs form part.

The great distinction between the old style of slaughterhouse, whether in private ownership or in a public abattoir, and the slaughterhouse of modern design, lies in the interior arrangements of the building. In place of a compartment enclosed for the separate use of each butcher, which is usually ill-lighted, and which offers no facilities for meat inspection, there is for each kind of animal one spacious and lofty hall, amply lighted and ventilated, in which the inspectors can see everything that is going on. In the hall for oxen a broad walk runs along the centre. On one side of this the animals are killed, on the other side the meat is in the first place hung to cool naturally during some hours. The columns which support the roof serve to mark out the space to be used by each butcher. Every step in the killing of an animal and the treatment of the carcase and the offal is fully open to view. There are on the columns separate hooks on which each part of the viscera that has to be inspected must be hung. The inspector passes along the central walk, and if satisfied stamps the carcase, which cannot be dealt with as food without such authorization. If he is not satisfied, portions are cut off for examination in the laboratory. If the meat has to be condemned it is at once removed for disposal according to regulations. This is the important matter for securing that the meat is wholesome. The inspection of the smaller animals is conducted in a similar manner.

Besides the slaughtering of animals there is another very important department of the abattoir. It is the place to which the flesh of all animals not there killed has to be brought for inspection. Meat which has already been inspected under a proper authority at another town is easily accepted upon the evidence of the stamps that have been applied to it. On the other hand there is in some places a very large trade in the export to other places of meat killed in a large abattoir. At Frankfurt a very large percentage of the meat killed is sent away.

The public abattoir is the only place in which an animal can be slaughtered for food whether it is imported or has been kept within the municipal area.

The members of the Committee who visited the new slaughterhouses at Birmingham saw the system which I have described very completely carried out. But it has not been possible at Birmingham to provide the extensive spaces between the different buildings, which are almost invariably provided in continental abattoirs recently built.

There are several questions of a practical nature which must be considered in much greater detail than is possible in this report. The proper dimensions for the various buildings can only be finally settled after the extent of the undertaking shall be decided on, but the relation of the buildings to each other so as to facilitate the whole of the business of slaughtering, meat inspection and disposal of the refuse is a point which is well illustrated by some of the abattoirs which I have seen. The business of killing and disposing of the carcases of animals is one which, beyond most other businesses, is liable to be carried on in an offensive manner. Indeed, it is exceedingly difficult to carry it on

without offence. I have observed in abattoirs on the continent which are not constructed on the modern system sights as offensive and nuisances as obnoxious as can be seen anywhere; but there was not, in any of the modern abattoirs which I have seen, the least offence to sight or to smell beyond what is inseparable from the slaughter of an animal. And this exception applied only to the interior of the buildings. The illustrations which I give of the abattoirs at Leipzic were taken early, at the busiest hour of one of their busiest days. Animals were being taken on foot or in trucks on tram lines from the lairs to the slaughterhouses. Beyond this there was nothing to be seen that would indicate what was going on in the slaughterhouses. There was very little noise, and no disorder; the roadways were kept scrupulously clean. The men were suitably and respectably clad. At the moment when the view of the slaughterhouse for oxen was taken killing was going on in every compartment, and in many cases cattle, fitted with a proper mask in which they are killed, were being led up to take their turn. I have to thank Herr Professor Licht, the city architect, for facilitating my inspection of these very fine and important buildings.

I express no opinion on the necessity for abattoirs of the modern type on the score of health, but I may offer to the Committee some results of my observations on other points of importance.

It appears to me that where slaughtering is done openly in well-lighted halls the whole arrangements are more systematic and cleanly. In such circumstances there are no means of concealing slovenliness or dirt, and a proper supervision ensures that the least possible amount of dirt is produced. All subsequent operations as to cold storage of the meat and dealing with the offal are of course much facilitated by the arrangements of a public abattoir.

As regards the local butchers, I had some independent evidence that, while the municipality makes a profit from an abattoir, the butchers prefer the arrangement, because at a moderate cost they are relieved from the trouble and expense of a private establishment. They find it convenient to keep their meat stored in the cool chambers of the abattoir, fetching it away as they want it. In every butcher's shop there is a cold cupboard for storing a small stock of meat, and the municipality supplies them with ice of its own manufacture on moderate terms. The supply of meat from the abattoir is kept up by light closed vans handsomely got up, and bearing the name and telephone number of the butcher. I saw no carcases exposed in open vans. And with regard to the convenience of butchers who at present have their own slaughterhouses, it would be quite easy to arrange in any new abattoir that any one having sufficient business should have the exclusive or preferential use of lairs and place for slaughtering on terms suitable to the circumstances.

The opinion of important municipalities, as shown by the way they are dealing with this question, is, I think, of some significance. When I visited Buda-Pest as a delegate of the Council to the Health Congress, I found that the abattoirs entirely agreed with the general description herein given. I might say that the slaughtering was even more carefully done than anything I have recently seen. Strasburg, which I visited two years ago, had recently constructed an establishment of the improved type. Cologne is one of the cities which has lately done the same thing. At Brussels the extensive abattoirs, which I recently inspected, consist of separate killing shops, but there is a movement for reconstructing them on the modern principle, and a private society has put up a small abattoir as an example to the municipality. The great abattoirs of Paris are now being supplemented by a new establishment in the southern part of the city, and this is entirely in accordance with the modern system. As to Berlin, the modern system of slaughtering is well described in "A Study of Municipal Government,"* by Mr. J. Pollard, chairman of the Edinburgh Public Health Committee.

All the modern abattoirs that I have seen were erected with ample means of extension should that be necessary. At Frankfurt and Wiesbaden extensive additions are now being made. At Leipzic designs are ready for a large extension. In smaller towns I saw new abattoirs being built, and I was assured that within ten years no town in Germany, large or small, would be without such an establishment.

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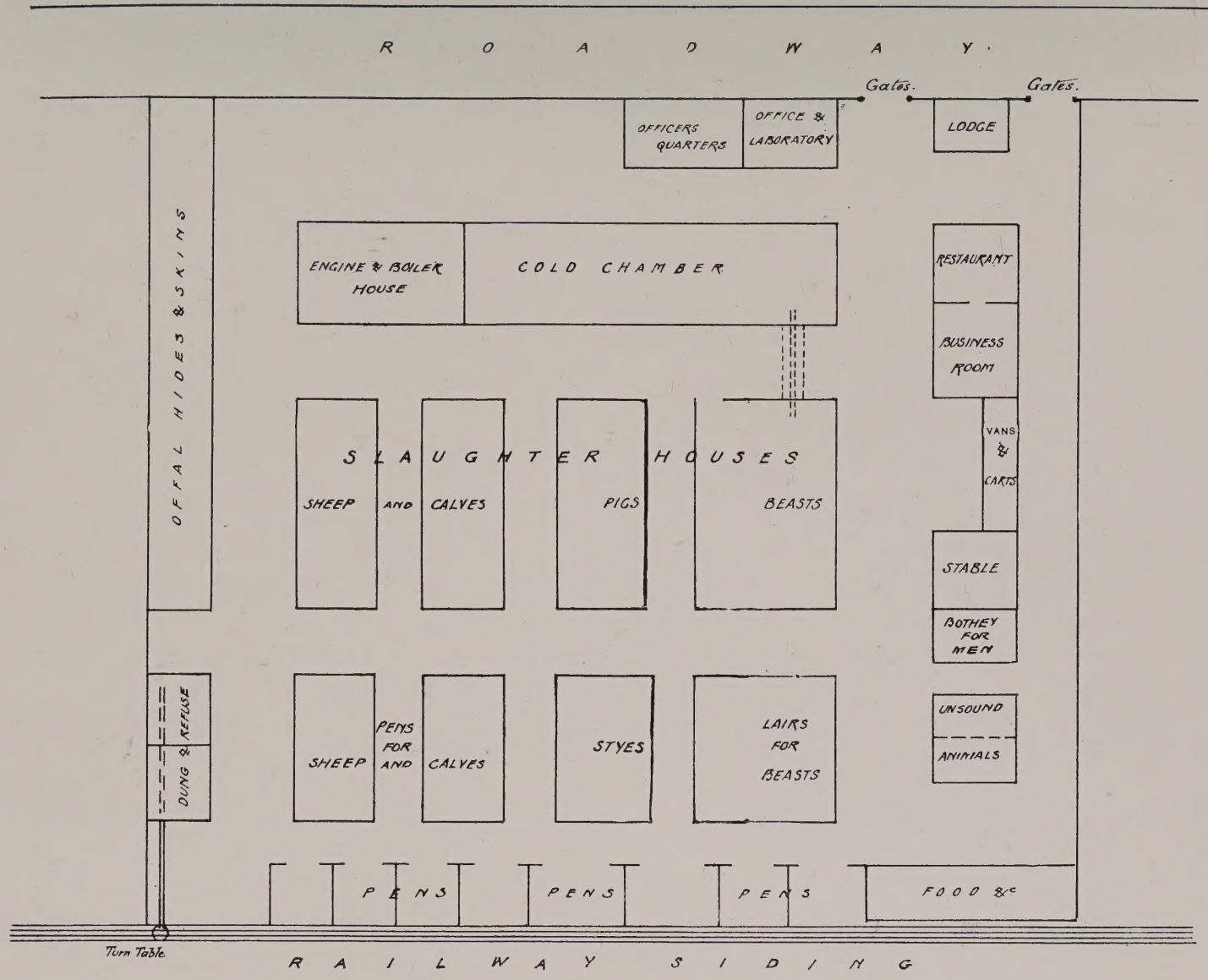
* Having gone over a great part of Berlin with this book in my hand, I venture to say that any person concerned with municipal government might profitably study it in relation to every branch of that subject.

The reference to me includes the planning of a suitable abattoir of the modern type. This must depend upon the nature of the site, but after conference with the medical officer I present herewith a sketch plan, giving a general idea of such an abattoir as will be in accordance with modern requirements. Should the Committee desire to investigate the matter further it would be easy to go more closely into the details and, if necessary, to obtain the opinions of continental architects whose names are most identified with this class of buildings.

THOS. BLASHILL,
*Architect.*




: Sketch for Abattoir :

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